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AUTHOR Queeney, Donna S.
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ABSTRACT

This book offers step-by-step guidance on using needs assessment to design high-quality programs in continuing education. The book begins with a definition and description of needs assessment as part of the process of developing a continuing education program. The first of the book's 10 chapters describes the role of needs assessment in identifying discrepancies between existing and desired proficiencies and establishes the distinction between needs, wants, and demands. Chapter 2 identifies several factors to be considered in planning a needs assessment, including organizational priorities. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on choosing the topic of a needs assessment and selecting one or more methods with which to accomplish the assessment. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 describe specific needs assessment methods: self-reports, focus group and nominal group processes, the Delphi process, the use of key informants, supervisor evaluations, surveys, and more sophisticated research methodology. Chapter 8 addresses the role in the broader program planning process of needs assessment and the data obtained through it. Evaluating the success of educational activities, a process that begins with identifying educational goals by assessing needs, is the topic of chapter 9. The final chapter places needs assessment in the context of a continuing education program's operations. Contains 84 references. (KC)

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